

Research Investigations 86-002, and 96-017
RDT 00-009

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Undersealing / Diamond Grinding PCCP

Description

Three independent investigations of aging Portland cement concrete pavements (PCCP), that were restored with a combination of undersealing and diamond grinding, were consolidated into one study. Undersealing fills in voids and restores support under PCCP slabs, while diamond grinding restores ride on the surface. The primary objective of this study was to measure the performance of the combination of undersealing and diamond grinding (U/D) and determine its reliability as a standard concrete pavement restoration (CPR) technique. The secondary objective was to determine the causes of early failures, if they occurred.

The combination of undersealing and diamond grinding as a CPR treatment to correct joint and crack faulting has not been used often in construction. The projects examined in this investigation are the only prime examples of U/D in Missouri, with the exception of a couple of others that were constructed too recently to acquire performance data from.

	RI86-02	RI96-17	RI91-01
Project #	7-P-71-329	J8I630 and J8I0631	1I 507-35
Route	171	44	35
County	Jasper	Greene	Harrison
Year Original Pavement Built	1950	1962	1974
Thickness	8"	8"	9"
Joint Spacing	20'	61.5'	61.5'
Reinforced	no	yes	Yes
Load Transfer	dowel bars probable	dowel bars	dowel bars
Base Type	unknown	4" Type 3	4" Type 3
Year Rehabbed	1985	1996	1992
Length of Rehab	7.28 miles	11.4 miles	2 -1000'
Depth of Faulting	≤ ½"	¾" ave. (up to 1 ½")	¼" ave.
Diamond Grinding	yes	yes	Yes
Undersealing	yes	yes	yes (on one 1000')
ESALs since Rehab	3 million	10 million	6 million
Estimated Cost per Lane-mile	\$21,300 (diamond grinding only)	\$22,800	N/A

Findings

The different investigations of U/D projects produced an array of results.

The Route 171 project performed well, probably beyond anyone's original expectations. There is currently no justification to consider rehabilitating the pavement in the near future either.

**Research
Development
and Technology
Division**

Missouri
Department
of Transportation

1617 Missouri Blvd.
P.O. Box 270
Jefferson City,
Missouri 65101

The I-44 projects appeared to have only momentarily halted the pavements' rate of deterioration. The prevalent faulting distress reappeared within a year after they were completed. Since then, maintenance personnel have been constantly making full depth patch repairs to keep the riding surface tolerable.

The I-35 minimum (diamond grinding only) and maximum (U/D w/ edge drains) restoration test sections yielded better results than the I-44 ones. They too returned to a rehabilitation-triggering level of roughness, but at a slower speed of deterioration. Keeping in mind that a few emergency repairs at transverse crack locations were required in 1995, they provided an acceptable level of service for approximately four to five years.

Conclusions

General:

- 1) Undersealing/diamond grinding can be an effective CPR technique under the right conditions.

Specific:

- 2) Diamond grinding an older PCCP at the joints, that is adequately supported and structurally sound, should not compromise slab performance.
- 3) Evidence of widespread pumping and highly plastic fine-grained subgrade soils with high in-situ water contents should eliminate a PCCP from being a candidate for U/D.

- 4) Retrofitting edge drains provide little, if any, additional benefit to U/D.
- 5) U/D should not be expected to provide more than five years of reasonable service to a PCCP with high cumulative ESALs.
- 6) U/D may provide ten years or more of service to a PCCP with low cumulative ESALs.

Recommendations

- 1) PCC pavements that meet the following criteria, pending an appropriate evaluation, may be eligible for U/D restoration without additional rehabilitation:
 - have relatively intact slabs without excessive transverse cracking
 - have good load transfer
 - have average faulting to a depth that will not compromise the structural integrity of the pavement slab when removed (typically $\frac{1}{2}$ ")
 - do not have highly plastic subgrade soils, with in-situ water contents well above optimum, that are prone to widespread pumping
- 2) Design life assumptions for PCC pavements that receive U/D restoration should fall within the following ranges:
 - no more than five years for pavements defined as heavy duty by ESAL loadings
 - five to ten years for pavements defined as light or medium duty by ESAL loadings